

Message Text

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TAGS: SHUM SU UK
SUBJECT: SHCHARANSKY AND GINSBURG TRIALS: CALLAGHAN
AND OWEN REACTION

SUMMARY: IN PARLIAMENT JULY 10, THE PRIME MINISTER AND
FOREIGN SECRETARY EXPRESSED STRONG OPPOSITION TO SOVIET
HANDLING OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HELSINKI MONITORING
GROUP. OWEN ADDED THAT ON-GOING DISCUSSIONS SUCH AS
SALT SHOULD BE CONTINUED, AND HINTED AT PLAYING THE
CHINESE CARD. END SUMMARY.

1. THE PRIME MINISTER TOOK TIME DURING A REPORT ON THE
BREMEN EC SUMMIT TO CHARACTERIZE THE TRIALS AS HAVING
"SOME OF THE HALLMARKS OF A RETURN TO THE TRIALS WE KNEW
IN STALINIST DAYS" AND THAT THESE TRIALS WILL PUT A
"SEVERE TEST" ON THE SOVIET RELATIONS WITH OTHER
COUNTRIES.

2. DAVID OWEN TOLD COMMONS THAT "THE TRIALS, INASMUCH
AS THE CHARGES RELATE SPECIFICALLY TO ACTIVITIES FULLY
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COMPATIBLE WITH THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT, ARE IN DIRECT
CONTRAVENTION OF THE SPIRIT AND INTENTION OF THE ACT."
THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, HE CONTINUED, HAVE WARNED THE
SOVIETS THAT THEIR HANDLING OF SUCH CASES WOULD HAVE
CONSEQUENCES FOR ANGLO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND FOR THE
POSSIBILITIES OF PROGRESS IN EAST-WEST RELATIONS
GENERALLY. OWEN CONCLUDED: "THE SOVIET UNION MUST

RECOGNIZE THAT THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED KINGDOM WILL NOT ACCEPT THAT THERE CAN BE IMPROVEMENT IN DETENTE AND IN RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES WITHOUT PROGRESS BEING MADE OVER INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS." IN HIS REMARKS, OWEN CAREFULLY SEPARATED THE HELSINKI GROUP ACTIVITIES FROM THE SPECIFIC COURT PROCEEDINGS INVOLVING GINSBURG AND SHCHARANSKY. HE REPLIED TO ULSTER MP ENOCH POWELL, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HMG WOULD REJECT SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF LAW IN THE UK, BUT SAID ONE MUST STILL RESPECT DUE PROCESSES AND HOPE THAT THE (SOVIET) COURT WILL ALLOW A FAIR AND JUST HEARING.

3. THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE OPPOSITION, SHADOW FONSEC JOHN DAVIES, LIMITED HIMSELF TO EXPRESSING HIS HORROR AT THE TRIAL OF "INNOCENT MEN WHOSE CRIMES WE CANNOT RECOGNIZE." HE HOPED THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE THIS EXAMPLE OF THE SOVIET UNION'S "IMPLACABLE HOSTILITY" INTO ACCOUNT IN CONSIDERING THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICA.

4. UNDER QUESTIONING ABOUT HMG'S REACTION, OWEN OBSERVED THAT REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE USSR TO THE UK ABOUT THE LATTER'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD NOT BE GIVEN "THE SAME DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE AS THEY MIGHT OTHERWISE. I HAVE IN MIND OUR RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES." OWEN ALSO REMARKED THAT UK CONCURRENCE WITH THE NATO AGREEMENT TO INCREASE DEFENSE UNCLASSIFIED

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BUDGETS REFLECTED HMG'S RECOGNITION OF THE CURRENT DETERIORATION IN DETENTE.

5. OWEN WENT ON TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN DISCUSSIONS INVOLVING DETENTE, SUCH AS SALT, CTB, MBFR, AND COMMERCIAL/TRADE MATTERS, AND THE CULTURAL, SPORTING AND OTHER EXCHANGES UNDER THE FINAL ACT. THE FORMER ARE "BEST LEFT IF WE ARE TO CARRY ON IN THE NORMAL WAY," WHEREAS IN THE LATTER AREA "THERE IS A STRONG CASE FOR INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS."

6. COMMENT: BRITISH PUBLIC AND PRESS REACTION HAS BEEN PREDICTABLY STRONG AGAINST THE TRIALS, BUT ASIDE FROM ONE SMALL DEMONSTRATION (SEPTTEL) WE HAVE NOTICED NO MARKED SYMPATHY FROM ANY SEGMENT OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM FOR HALTING EAST-WEST ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS SALT, THAT ARE DEEMED TO SERVE LONGER-TERM WESTERN INTERESTS.

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